IMPOSTORS BUSY IN SLEUTH ROLES IN PHAGAN CASE

Representing Themselves as

Pinkertons, Two Men Are

Interviewing Leading Wit-

nesses in Mystery.

DETECTIVES WORRIED BY PLANTED EVIDENCE

Men Working on Case Be-

lieve That Some Interests

May Be Trying to Fix the

Crime on Suspects.

What interests are promoting the planting of evidence in the Mary Phagan mystery?

This question confronted police headquarters yesterday. Further evidence of mysterious forces underhandedly at work on the baffling case was revealed when it became known that imposters, representing themselves to be Pinkerton detectives had been questioning leading witnesses.

This new disclosure, coupled with past discoveries of obviously "framed-up" evidence, has stirred the police and solicitor's staff to action. Arrests are expected at any moment. If the bogus detectives are caught, Chief Lanford declared they will be thrown into prison, held without bond or communication, and put through a gruelling third degree.

Why Such Methods?

Although many theories have been advanced, the police are at a loss to fathom the cause of such methods. It has even been suggested that the real murderer is at liberty, and, in the effort to avert suspicion which might be cast upon himself, is endeavoring

to weave the web tighter around the suspects already under arrest.

Friday morning a suave well-dressed man appeared at the home of Mrs. J. W. Coleman, mother of the murdered girl, and, introducing himself as a detective from the Pinkerton agency, put her through an hours exhaustive examination relative to Mary's character and habits.

She told her husband of the incident. He later questioned Harry Scott, of the Pinkertons, regarding the man who had appeared at the Coleman home. Scott was astounded at the revelation. Aware that he was the only man from the Pinkertons at work on the mystery, he knew that the man who had questioned the dead girl's mother was an impostor.

Later, George W. Epps, a leading witness at the coroner's inquest, was visited by a man answering an entirely different description from Mrs. Coleman's visitor. George is the youthful companion of the Phagan girl, with whom he rode uptown on the morning of her disappearance. He was quizzed thoroughly of the girl's habits and character.

Evidence Is Being Planted.

The Pinkertons were informed of this. Descriptions of both men have been furnished a squad of headquarters detectives who have been detailed to the special assignment of searching for the impostors. A Pinkerton official said Saturday night.

"I am satisfied that evidence is being planted. The object of such operations is mystifying. The clock record is plainly a "framed-up" clue. The shirt appears to be, and there are numerous

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other indications. Also, we are convinced that there are mysterious forces antagonizing our investigation. Sad will be the day that these men are caught."

Solicitor Dorsey Active.

Solicitor Hugh M. Dorsey has taken a decidedly active hand in the investigation. His entire staff has been loosed upon the mystery, together with a number of private detectives in his employ. Coroner Donehoo is also giving his entire time and energy in assisting the detectives and police.

Saturday morning the coroner, solicitor, detective chief and a number of detectives revisited the scene of the murder. A minute examination was made of the pencil factory premises, and measurements were taken of the basement. From 1 o'clock in the afternoon until 6:30, the investigators were closeted in Chief Lanford's office, conferring over the evidence.

Headquarters was flooded with wild and groundless rumors throughout the day, a majority of which were to the effect that Mary Phagan had been seen on the afternoon of her murder. These stories were all found to be groundless. Chief Lanford declared last night that he had confined himself to the theory that the murdered girl never emerged from the pencil plant after entering it to draw her pay.

A number of new witnesses were subpoenaed from the coroner's office. Although their names would be divulged, nor the character of the testimony which they will be expected to render, it is the general belief that they are former women employees of the pencil concern. New witnesses are being summoned daily. The total list, when the coroner's inquest is re-opened Monday afternoon, will probably reach 300 or more.

Will Examine Bloody Shirt.

Detective Scott Saturday turned over to City Bacteriologist Claude W. Smith the bloody shirt found at the home of the negro Newt Lee. It will be put through a thorough microscopic inspection to ascertain if the blood spots compare with those on the clothing of the murdered girl. Dr. Smith stated, however, that the examination could not be made until early next week.

Action by Grand Jury.

"I am not in a position to state when the grand jury will take up the investigation of the Phagan murder," Solicitor General Hugh M. Dorsey stated last night. "The new grand jury will be impanelled on Monday and it is certain that the matter can not be taken up that day. The coroner's inquest is to be continued on that day, but whether or not the grand jury will wait until this is completed or not. I can not now say.

"The only reason for my personal investigation of the case and my conferences with police and detective heads," added the solicitor, "is because of the exceptional nature of the case. The duties of the solicitor's office prevent me from attending every inquest and police examination, but I feel that this affair demands

that I should familiarize myself with every detail while it is fresh, for by that means I can better handle it when it becomes my business to prosecute the murderer, whoever he should appear to be."

From the manner in which the solicitor spoke of his conferences and with the police officials and the coroner it is inferred that there is yet as deep a cloud as ever over the murder and that nothing has been found out which has not already been published in the daily papers.

The grand jury when once sworn in, has the authority to take up its own examination at any time a majority of its members see fit and until it is impanelled and takes formal action, there is no way of determining what will be done, unless the solicitor should announce his intention of placing the matter before that body.

The usual procedure is for the jurymen to wait until the coroner's jury completes its action and then take up an investigation for indictment of any parties bound over to it. In case its members see fit, though, the investigation may be begun at any time.

Scream Frightens Girls.

The employees in the National Pencil plant were badly frightened early Saturday morning, when a blood-curdling scream came from the basement. Girls stopped their work and thought of Mary Phagan and her tragic fate flashed through their minds.

An investigation was started immediately. Twenty officials of the plant, swinging lanterns, climbed into the basement. It was then found that a member of the solicitor general's staff was testing the range of sound from the spot in the basement in which the murdered girl was found. The cry penetrated the first floor and was just heard upon the second.

Believe Girl Was Gagged.

Did the murderer use the strips of his victim's underclothing to suppress her screams—convert them into a gag which he never removed?

Chief Lanford expresses his opinion that the strips were not the garrote with which she was strangled to death, as at first believed, but were bound over the mouth to stifle her cries for help.

The detective chief also believes that the girl was alive when she was carried into the basement, but unconscious, and that upon regaining consciousness, a struggle ensued. Signs of scuffling were evident in the sawdust neighboring the spot in which the corpse was discovered.